

POPULATION *Notes*

MINNESOTA STATE DEMOGRAPHER

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MINNESOTA ELECTS MULTITUDE OF LOCAL OFFICIALS

- Minnesota ranks 8th in number of elected officials.
- Half of Minnesota's local elected officials serve on township governments.
- Minnesota ranks tenth in the nation in the number of state elected officials.
- Most elected officials in Minnesota are male, white and live outside metropolitan areas.
- Since 1967, the number of elected officials in Minnesota has declined by 28 percent.

Minnesota elects more officials than most states, ranking in the top ten in total elected officials, state legislators, municipal officials, and township officials.¹ In 1987, township and municipal officials made up three quarters of Minnesota's elected officials. Most elected officials are white males. However, the number of women has increased significantly in the last twenty years. During this same period, the total number of officials declined 28 percent, a much larger decrease than in the nation or in the Midwest states. This decline was primarily due to consolidation of school districts.

Minnesota Sixth Highest in Number of Elected Officials

Nine states accounted for forty-four percent of all elected officials in the nation. Five of those states (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) are in the Midwest region.² Midwestern states with many small cities and villages, many township governments and many small independent school districts tend to have more elected officials than other areas in the nation.

In 1987, Minnesota elected 18,887 officials to rank eighth in the nation. These officials served on 3,556 state and local governments, including 87 counties, 855 municipalities, 1,798 townships, 441 school districts, and 374 special districts. Special districts are independent governments established for limited purposes such as soil and water

conservation, fire protection, community development, and health services.

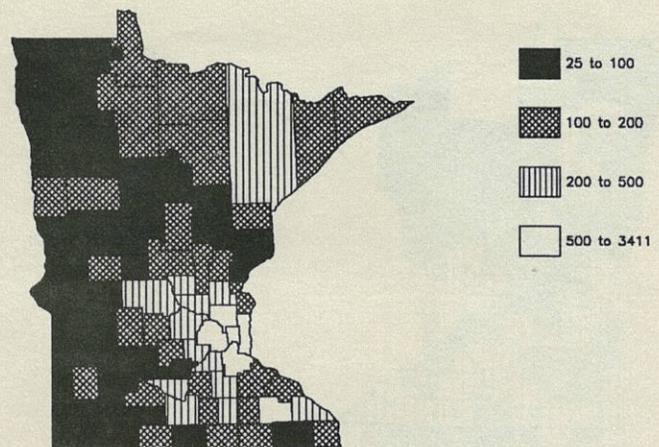
Minnesota elected 579 state officials, including 201 state legislators, 6 elected members of the executive branch and 372 elected judges. **In total elected state officials, Minnesota ranks tenth in the nation.** Pennsylvania elected the largest number (1,182) of state officials in 1987, and Delaware the fewest (80).

Minnesota ranked sixth in the nation in the number of state legislators in 1987. **Each Minnesota state legislator represented 21,000 people.** The nation averaged one state legislator for every 32,000 people. California elected one state legislator for every 224,000 persons. By contrast, each New Hampshire legislator represented 2,422 individuals.

Nonmetropolitan Areas Have Most Elected Officials

Most elected officials in the U.S. live outside Metropolitan Statistical Areas. **In Minnesota only 23.7 percent of elected officials live in metropolitan areas.** Within Minnesota MSAs, 18.2 officials are elected for each 10,000 people, but outside MSAs, 76.2 officials are elected for every 10,000 people, or more than four times as many. In northern

Figure 1. Number of People Represented by One Local Official by County



and western Minnesota counties, the ratio is as high as one official for every 25 people (Figure 1). In rural Minnesota, municipal and township governments often serve small population concentrations. As a result, Minnesota elects a very large number of officials, most residing outside MSAs (Figure 2).

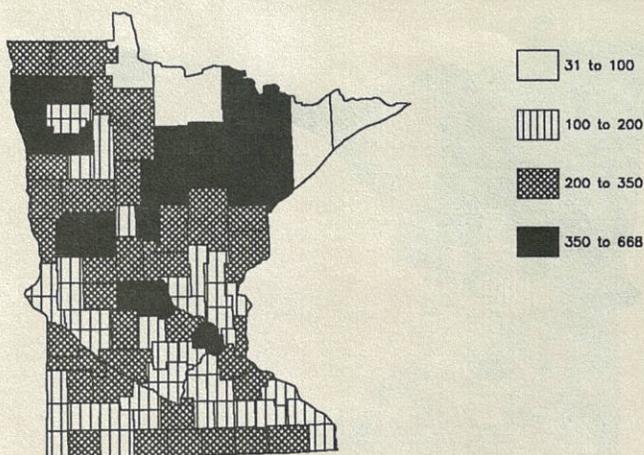
As population centers expand, city governments often assimilate township governments and functions. This reduces the number of elected officials in Metropolitan Statistical Areas. **In Minnesota, township government officials account for half of all elected officials.** In rural areas, especially, townships tend to have very small populations.

Comparing Scott County with Otter Tail County illustrates the reduction of local governments in urban areas. Scott County is a metropolitan county with a population of 57,846 in the 1990 census. Otter Tail County is a nonmetropolitan county with a slightly smaller population (50,714). Scott County elected fifty-three township officials and forty-eight municipal officials in 1987. Otter Tail County, on the other hand, elected 306 township officials and 107 municipal officials. Otter Tail County elects four times as many officials as Scott County.

Number of Elected Officials Declines Since 1967

Urbanization, population growth and efforts to streamline local governments have led to fewer local governments, fewer local elected officials and fewer officials per unit of population. **The number of elected officials in Minnesota has declined by 28 percent since 1967.** In 1967, Minnesota ranked third in the nation with 26,290 elected officials. The number of officials per 10,000 population also has declined since 1967. Similar trends occurred in the Midwest and in the nation (Table 1).

Figure 2. Total Elected Officials by County



The number of local governments has decreased fifteen percent in Minnesota since 1967. Most of the decline came through consolidation of small independent school districts. **The number of school districts has been reduced by nearly two-thirds (from 1,267 to 441) since 1967.** In the Midwest states, the number of local governments also declined, but nationally, the number of governments increased slightly since 1967.

Table 1. Change in Governments and Officials 1967-1987

Number of Governments

| | 1967 | 1987 | % Change |
|---------------|--------|--------|----------|
| 1967-1987 | | | |
| United States | 81,298 | 83,235 | 2.4% |
| Midwest | 41,039 | 38,322 | -6.6% |
| Minnesota | 4,185 | 3,556 | -15.0% |

Number of Elected Officials

| | 1967 | 1987 | % Change |
|---------------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1967-1987 | | | |
| United States | 521,758 | 497,155 | -4.7% |
| Midwest | 246,958 | 216,486 | -12.3% |
| Minnesota | 26,290 | 18,887 | -28.1% |

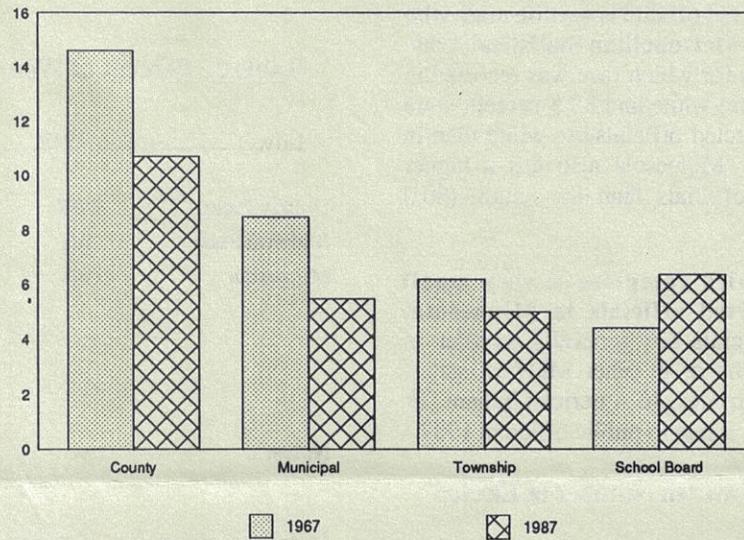
Officials per 10,000 Population

| | 1967 | 1987 | % Change |
|---------------|------|------|----------|
| 1967-1987 | | | |
| United States | 26.7 | 20.6 | -22.8% |
| Midwest | 45.4 | 36.5 | -19.6% |
| Minnesota | 73.5 | 44.8 | -39.0% |

As the number of school districts has declined, the number of officials elected in each school district has increased. In 1967, Minnesota elected 4.4 officials per school district. That number had increased to 6.4 in 1987 (Figure 3). Nonetheless, the total number of school district officials has declined by fifty percent since 1967.

Changes in the structure of Minnesota county government, beginning in 1975, reduced the number of county officials. The offices of County Superintendent of Schools and Court Commissioner were abolished. The office of District Court Clerk became appointive in 1977, and some counties have combined the offices of County Auditor and County Treasurer. These changes resulted in 339 fewer elected county officials statewide.

Figure 3. Officials Per Local Government in Minnesota (1967 and 1987)



Salaries for Most Elected Officials Are Small

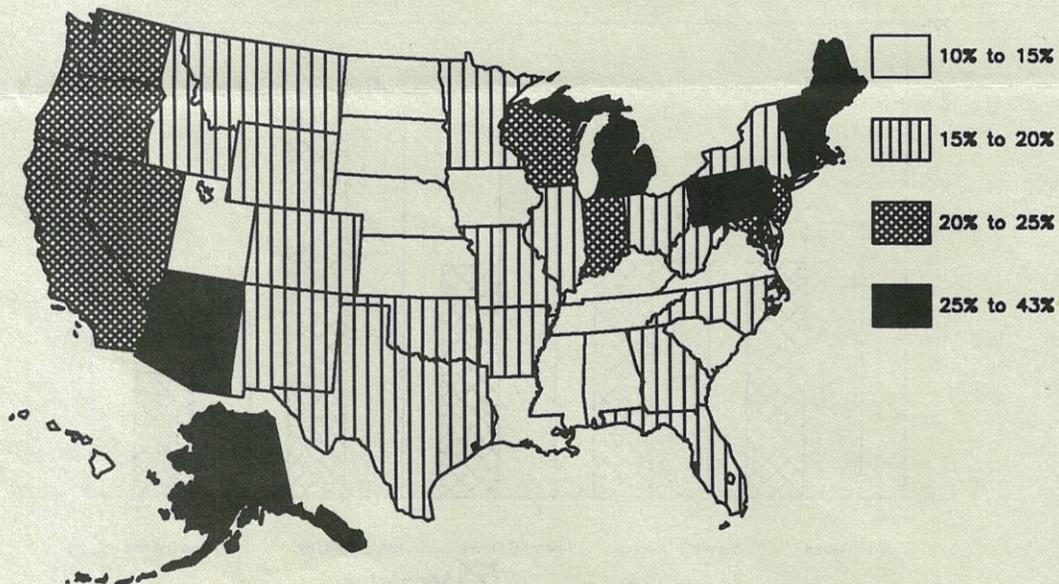
Salaries paid to elected officials are not major expenses for most local governments in Minnesota. Some mayors, city council members and school board officials receive no regular salary. The median annual salary paid to school board members statewide is \$435. Township officials receive small per meeting stipends. Salaries for municipal officials in small towns (less than 2,500 population) range from no regular salary to \$3,600 annually. **In township and city governments which account for seventy-five percent of all Minnesota local elected officials, salaries are small.**³

Salaries for elected officials in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth are much higher than for smaller cities and towns, and range from \$7,500 for Duluth council members to \$74,000

for the mayor of St. Paul. However, annual salaries for the mayors and council members of large suburban cities (population larger than 20,000) are relatively low ranging from \$3,600 to \$15,000. Salaries for suburban city officials are comparable to those paid in larger cities in Greater Minnesota.

County officials receive larger salaries than most city, township, and school board officials. Annual salaries range from \$6,552 for Red Lake County Commissioners to \$90,048 for Ramsey County Attorney. In some counties, salary expenses are reduced by making some county offices part-time.

Figure 4. Percent of Women Among Local Officials, 1987



Minnesota Officials are Mostly Male and White

The typical Minnesota elected official is a white male who resides outside a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. Of all local elected officials for which race was reported in Minnesota, 99.6 percent were white and 83.5 percent were male.⁴ More Minnesota elected officials are white than in the nation (97.5 percent). Minnesota also has a higher proportion of male local officials than the nation (80.0 percent).

Non-whites and Hispanics comprise a very small percentage of local elected officials in Minnesota. Numbers of minority officials are generally smaller in Minnesota than in the nation or in other Midwest states. Minnesotans elected 49 Hispanics, 46 American Indians, 14 African-Americans and one Asian to public office in 1987.

Women Show Steady Growth in Number of Elected Positions

Fewer Minnesota elected officials were women (16.5 percent) in 1987 as compared with the Midwest region (18.7 percent female) and the nation (20.0 percent female). In nine states and the District of Columbia, more than 25 percent of local officials are women. Nearly one third of all local officials in the New England states are women (Figure 4). In most states, women are more likely to hold local office than to be elected to the state legislature. More Minnesota women are elected to school boards and municipal governments than to other local governments (Figure 5).

In 1990, 18.4 percent of the Minnesota legislature was female. This number represents a significant increase over 1977 when twelve Minnesota state legislators (6.0 percent) were women. Nationwide, women have steadily increased

their numbers in state legislatures from 4 percent in 1969 to 17.1 percent in 1990 (Table 3).⁵

Table 3. Percent of Women in State Legislatures

| | 1969 | 1977 | 1987 | 1990 |
|---------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| United States | 4.0% | 9.1% | 15.7% | 17.1% |
| Midwest State | n/a | 8.1% | 16.0% | 17.8% |
| Minnesota | n/a | 6.0% | 15.4% | 18.4% |

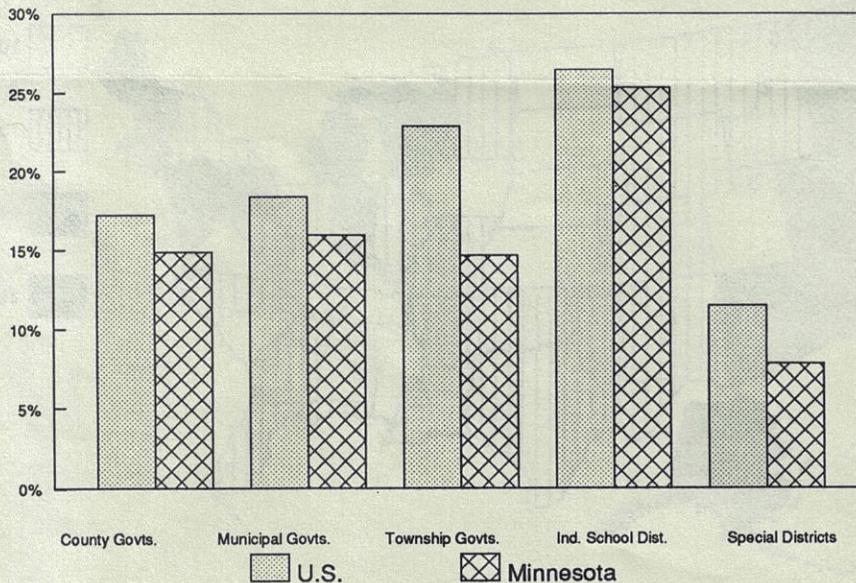
Notes:

¹Information in this report is taken from the Bureau of the Census publications, "Popularly Elected Officials" (Census of Governments, vol. 1, no. 2) for 1967, 1977, and 1987. Although the Census of Governments is conducted every five years, information on popularly elected officials is only collected every ten years. Data in the Census of Governments is collected through a mail survey of all local governments. Response to the 1987 survey (which began in October, 1986) was 87 percent. Local government counts reflect operations during the period beginning July 1, 1986, through June 30, 1987. The 1987 Census of Governments collected data on race, sex and Hispanic origin of elected officials for the first time.

²The top ten ranked states are Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, New York, Ohio, Michigan, California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Missouri.

³Information on salaries paid to local elected officials comes from the Minnesota School Boards Association, the League of Minnesota

Figure 5. Percentage of Women in Five Types of Local Government



Cities, the Association of Minnesota Counties, the Minnesota Association of Townships, and the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities.

⁴In Minnesota, ethnicity was not reported for 8.6 percent of elected local officials. The proportion unreported for the Midwest region was 12.9 percent, and for the nation, 12.5 percent.

⁵Historical data on women in state legislatures has been compiled by the Center for the American Woman and Politics, National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

Update:

In the last issue of Population Notes we started a spotlight series on local access points (State Data Centers) to the 1990 census information. We listed many contacts for Northern Minnesota and said that you should be able to get census information from an office near you. We would like to continue on with that series this time spotlighting the contacts for Central Minnesota. Again the names and addresses of the contacts will be in county order alphabetically.

| County | City Location | Organization | Telephone Number |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---|-------------------|
| Anoka | Blaine | Anoka County Library | 612-784-1100 |
| Benton, Sherburne & Stearns | St. Cloud | St. Cloud Area Planning Organization | 612-252-7568 |
| | St. Cloud | Great River Regional Library | 612-251-7282 |
| | St. Cloud | St. Cloud State University | 612-255-2086 |
| Dakota | Eagan | Dakota County Library | 612-452-9600 |
| Goodhue | Red Wing | Red Wing Public Library | 612-388-2884 |
| Hennepin | Chanhassen | Chanhassen Public Library | 612-934-8689 |
| | Edina | Southdale-Hennepin Library | 612-830-4933 |
| | Minneapolis | U of M, Machine Readable Data Center | 612-624-4389 |
| | Minneapolis | Minneapolis Public Library | 612-372-6534 |
| | | U of M, Wilson Library | 612-624-5073 |
| Isanti | Cambridge | East Central Library | 612-689-1901 |
| Kanabec | Mora | East Central Regional Development Commission | 612-679-4065 |
| Kandiyohi | Willmar | Mid-Minnesota Regional Development Commission | 612-235-8504 |
| Ramsey | Roseville | Ramsey County Public Library | 612-631-0494 |
| | St. Paul | Hill Reference Library | 612-227-9531 |
| | St. Paul | College of St. Catherine Library | 612-690-6647x6652 |
| | St. Paul | St. Paul Public Library | 612-292-6178 |
| | | U of M, St. Paul Campus Library | 612-624-1212 |
| Stevens | Morris | U of M-Morris, Briggs Library | 612-589-6176 |
| Swift | Appleton | Upper MN Valley Regional Development Commission | 612-289-1981 |
| Washington | Cottage Grove | Washington County Library | 612-459-2040 |



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